

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, SA, XF

SUBJ: SAUDI NERVOUSNESS AT LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE

AND THEIR OPPOSITION TO OUR VOTE ON THE PALESTINE

ISSUES

SUMMARY: RASHAD PHARAON, ROYAL ADVISOR, ASKED ME TO CALL
ON HIM IN RIYADH NOV 23. HE SAID THE SAUDIS WERE DISTURBED
ABOUT THE THREATENING SPEECHES MADE BY SECRETARIES
KISSINGER AND SIMON; SAID THE ARABS ASKED IF THE AMERICANS
WERE PREPARING FOR WAR WHICH WOULD "MEAN THE END OF
CIVILIZATION." HE CONDEMNED TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, AS DID
ALL SAUDIS, BUT THE UNITED STATES SEEMED STRANGELY UNAFFECTED
BY ISRAELI ATTACKS ON DEFENSELESS ARAB VILLAGES. HE URGED
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THAT THE UNITED STATES BE SWIFT IN MOVING ISRAEL TOWARD

PEACE. END SUMMARY.

1. RASHAD PHARAON, ROYAL ADVISOR, SUMMONED ME TO RIYADH NOV 23. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY DISTURBED; HIS VOICE QUIVERED AS HE DESCRIBED WHAT THE SAUDIS THOUGHT WAS THE U.S. DESIRE - BY OUR LACK OF RESPONSE TO FRENCH AND SAUDI PROPOSALS - TO UNITE THE OIL CONSUMERS IN A CONFRONTATION WITH THE PRODUCERS. SUCH A POLICY, HE SAID, MIGHT DRIVE SAUDI ARABIA INTO COOPERATION WITH IRAN AND "OTHER RADICALS," AND ULTIMATELY TO DISASTER.

2. PHARAON QUOTED AGAIN ARTICLES IN NEWSWEEK ABOUT U.S. PLANS TO INVADE SAUDI ARABIA. HE ALSO QUOTED THE NOV 18 NEWSWEEK ARTICLE ON SECRETARY SCHLESINGER WHO ALLEGEDLY WAS PLANNING THREATENING MOVES AGAINST THE ARABS AND WHO HAD GIVEN ISRAEL A "VAST ARRAY OF TANKS, ARTILLERY, SAMRT BOMBS," WITH RESULT THAT ISREAL IS STRONGER THAN IT WAS A YEAR AGO AND "COULD WIN A WAR BY MOUNTING A FAST DESPERATE ALL-OUT EFFORT." THE NEWSWEEK ARTICLE ALSO SPOKE OF THE OBVIOUS THREAT THAT COULD BE MADE AGAINST OPEC; "A FLOTILLA OF 60 U.S. WARSHIPS WITH AIRCRAFT CARRIERS MIGHT SHOW UP AT THE HEAD OF THE PERSIAN GULF." (I HAD TO TELL PRINCE SULTAN LATER IN THE DAY OF THE CONSTELLATION MOVEMENTS IN THE GULF - JIDDA 6933).

3. PHARAON ALSO RAISED THE SUBJECT OF VOTES "AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS" IN THE UN. HE SAID WE WERE TRYING TO FIGHT A "TIDE OF HISTORY" AND THAT, LIKE IT OR NOT, THE WORLD IS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH PALESTINIANS. ONLY THE UNITED STATES AMONG THE GREAT POWERS SEEMED NOT TO RECOGNIZE THIS. I GAVE HIM OUR RATIONALE FOR OUR VOTES BUT HE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE IMPRESSED.

4. DR. PHARAON SAID THE SAUDIS HAVE BEEN ALBE TO WORK WITH AND EVEN TO CONTROL THE ACTIONS OF THE PLO TO A CERTAIN EXTENT BECAUSE THEY WERE ABLE TO TELL THE PALESTINIANS AND OTHERS THAT EVENTUALLY THE UNITED STATES WOULD UNDERSTAND WHERE ITS OWN INTERESTS LAY AND WOULD WORK WITH THE ARABS TOWARD A JUST PEACE IN THE AREA. AMERICA'S PRESENT ATTITUDES HAD RESULTED IN THEIR (THE SAUDIS) BEING ACCUSED OF BEING DECEIVED BY THE SECRET

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AMERICANS; THE RADICALS NOW SAY THAT THE AMERICANS WILL SUPPORT ONLY ISRAEL UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. THE SAUDI STILL TRUSTED SECRETARY KISSINGER BUT THEY WONDERED WHETHER THE CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENT AND THE NEW AMERICAN CONGRESS WILL ALLOW HIM TO TAKE THE REQUISITE ACTIONS TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST. AND PHARAON SAID THE SAUDIS ARE AGAIN QUESTIONING U.S. INTENATIONS. REVERTING TO SECRETARY

KISSINGER'S AND SECRETARY SIMON'S RECENT SPEECHES, PHARAON ADDED BOTH MEN KNEW THAT SAUDI ARABIA'S POLICY WAS TO BRING DOWN OIL PRICES; THEY KNEW THAT SAUDI ARABIA UNDERSTOOD THE DANGERS TO WORLD ECONOMY AND HIGH PRICES, AND BOTH KNEW THAT SAUDI ARABIA WISHED TO COOPERATE WITH THE UNITED STATES TO SOLVE THE ENERGY AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD. YET NOWHERE IN EITHER OF THE SPEECHES WAS THERE ANY HINT OF COMPROMISE WITH THE PRODUCERS, NOWHERE WAS THERE A MENTION OF SAUDI ARABIA'S ROLE OR SAUDI ARABIA'S DESIRES. ALL PRODUCERS WERE LUMPED TOGETHER AS THE "ENEMY."

6. DR. PHARAON THEN TURNED TO TERRORISM; SAID THAT THE SAUDIS DEPLORED THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON BESAN AND THE BOAC AIRCRAFT. THEY HAD NOTICED THE FUROR CREATED IN THE UNITED STATES BY TERRORIST ACTIONS, PARTICULARLY WHEN DIRECTED AGAINST ISRAEL. THEY HAD ALSO NOTICED THE VIRTUAL LACK OF RESPONSE WHEN THE ISREALIS ATTACKED LEBANESE VILLAGES OR EVEN WHEN THEY SHELLED A SOUTH LEBANESE TOWN, KILLING NUMEROUS CIVILIANS - NOT RPT NOT FEDAYEEN. THE ARABS WERE FORCED TO CONCLUDE, HE SIAD, THAT THE AMERICANS AND THE WEST IN GENERAL THINK ARAB LIFE IS NOT RPT NOT A SVALUABLE AS THE JEWISH LIFE, OR THAT ARABS HAVE NO HUMAN FEELINGS.

7. COMMENT: ARAFAT HAD JUST BEEN IN RIYADH AND MET WITH THE KING, FHAD AND OTHERS BUT NEITHER PHARAON OR FAHD (WHOME I SAW LATER THAT DAY) GAVE ME ANY INDICATION OF WHAT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, OR PROMISED BY THE SAUDIS. THE SAUDIS, AS MUCH AS ANY ARABS, NOW SEE THE NECESSITY OF CLOSE ARAB COOPERATION IN THE CASE OF ANOTHER MIDDLE EASTERN OUTBREAK. THEY UNDERSTAND THEIR OWN VULNERABILITIES AND WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO LOSE BY A WAR, AND THEY ARE STILL PREPARED FOR PEACE ON THE BASIS OF THE ALGIERS DECLARATIONS. BUT THE SAUDIS - ALONG WITH OTHER ARABS - ARE ALSO QUITE OBVIOUSLY FEELING THEIR OATS AND IN SHORT

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TIME EVEN THE SAUDI SMAY WELL ADOPT OR REVERT TO THE TRADITIONAL PLO STAND OF A "SECULAR STATE IN PALESTINE"; NO COMPROMISE WITH THE "RACIST STATE" OF ISRAEL.

8. THE LONGER THE IMPASSE CONTINUES THE MORE PROBABLE IT IS THE ARABS - AT LEAST THOSE IN THIS COUNTRY - WILL CONCLUDE THAT THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IS UNWORKABLE AND THAT THE ONLY WAY AND AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED WILL BE BIG POWER INVOLVEMENT IN GENEVA, AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT IMPOSED BY THE GREAT POWERS. THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE "ATHEIST COMMUNISTS" IN SUCH A NEGOTIATION IS BECOMING SOMEWHAT LESS FRIGHTENING TO THE SAUDIS THAN IT HAD BEEN. OUR ARGUMENT, WHICH THE SAUDIS ALREADY BELIEVED, HAS BEEN THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE IN NO WAY INTERESTED IN PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THAT THEY THRIVE ON TENSION. YET THE LONGER THE IMPASSE CONTINUES, THE LESS CONVINCING THIS ARGUMENT BE-

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